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SENATE WILL PROBE INTO CIVIL SERVICE

Investigation Doubtless Will Be Set Going This Session.

SERIOUS CHARGES AGAINST SYSTEM

That Pull, Not Merit, Brings Promotion, Heads Accusations.

By JOHN SNURE.
An investigation of the civil service system, with a view to determining whether the civil service cannot be improved upon, will probably be set going by the Senate before the special session ends.
It is expected the Senate Committee on Civil Service and Retrenchment, of which Senator Cummins of Iowa is chairman, will take up this investigation. It will doubtless proceed, if the Senate orders it, through the summer and fall and the committee will be ready to report at the beginning of the next regular session.
One of the phases of the civil service that the opponents of it are continually criticizing is the fact that promotions are not made on the merit system. In both Senate and House, bitter attacks are heard on the civil service, every session and this phase of the civil service question is more discussed than any other. It has not been long since the subject was up in the Senate and the workings of the civil service sharply scored. It was in connection with the discussion of the tariff bill that this was up.

Serious Charge.
Probably the most serious charge which is made as to the workings of the civil service system is that employees under it are promoted not in accordance with merit, but that they are promoted by their just ratings, but by favoritism and pull, political and otherwise. It is freely alleged that all sorts of abuses are brought about in this way.
In the discussion of the census bill, it was charged that the chiefs of divisions and heads of bureaus were converted into petty tyrants under the present system and that in effect they held the fate of the people under them in the hollow of their hands. From this, it is charged, many evils arise.
If the proposed investigation is made, it is not unlikely that some way will be evolved to weaken the authority of the chiefs of bureaus and divisions, and to elevate employees solely in accordance with merit. Such an arrangement would unquestionably be to the advantage of the great army of Government employees.

In all likelihood it would be a great benefit to the Government service and would be an encouragement to those employees who are earnestly seeking to get promotions, but have no particular leverage of a political or personal nature which they can exert. That it would add to the morale of the Government employees cannot well be doubted.

Blame Chiefs.
It is the fashion of Senators and Members of Congress to lay the blame for wrongs with respect to promotions on the bureau and division chiefs. As a matter of fact the Senator or Member of Congress is likely to be more blame than the chief. If a Senator or Representative goes to a division chief and asked that a certain employee be promoted, the rating of the employee will be examined. The chief may find the rating is not such as to justify promotion. But if the Senator or Representative is a map of influence and insists the ratings may be varied sufficiently to warrant promotion.

This question, of course, is a matter of fact. At the same time, and that the result is that there is practically no such thing as promotion by merit, but that the whole system is honeycombed with favoritism.

It is admitted that it will be difficult in the extreme to work out a plan of promotion by merit. At the same time, if it can be worked out it is clear that one of the chief weaknesses of the civil service system will have been removed. The new member of the Civil Service Commission, Mr. Washburn, is giving some attention to this question of how the merit system can be made to apply most effectively to promotions. Senator Cummins, as head of the Committee on Civil Service and Retrenchment, is much interested in it.

Another Phase.
If the proposed inquiry is gone into there is no doubt that another important phase of the civil service will have to be studied. This is the question of what to do with the old and superannuated employees. This has been a burning issue among the Government employees for years and it has been troublesome alike to department heads and to Congress.
This question, of course, involves the problem of whether to give civil pensions and provide a retirement system. This is one plan suggested but bitterly opposed by some members of Congress. Another proposition is to provide for a constant system of rotation in office by retiring the number of years any one person can remain in the classified service of the Government. Discharge of the superannuated employee is a times advocated but everyone hesitates to do this.

The problem, however, is getting more pressing every year and Congress will be compelled to meet it in some fashion in the near future.

PRIEST WINS BOAT.

ATLANTIC CITY, N. J., June 1.—The Rev. J. H. Gavin, a Catholic priest, of Phoenixville, Pa., has learned that his ticket, which cost \$1, had won the \$3,000 motor boat chance off by the Ventnor Motor Boat Club in aid of its building fund.

BULL FIGHTER KILLED.

CHIHUAHUA, Mexico, June 1.—Juan Tenorio, an amateur bull fighter, was gored to death here while trying to get the animal into the ring.

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BOYS—Two bright, over 16, wanted as messengers. See CITY EDITOR, 10th floor, Munsey Building.

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GROCERY STAND in prominent market; owner leaving city; bargain to quick buyer. EASTERN BUSINESS EXCHANGE, 614 F. my31-2t.

FOR SALE—Grocery; with living room; cheap rent; good business. 43 H N. E. my31-2t.

LUNCH ROOM with 16 furnished rooms combined; on Pa. ave.; owner leaving city; West; any reasonable offer accepted. BOX 206, Times office. my31-2t.

NICELY furnished rooming house; centrally located; 18 rooms; reasonably priced. BOX 125, Times office. my31-2t.

WANTED—To buy contents of small lunch room; must be cheap for cash. Address BOX 250, Times office. my31-2t.

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